

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, RH, TZ
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT NYERERE'S REACTION TO SMITH'S REJECTION OF
BRITISH PROPOSALS ON RHODESIA

REF: (A) JOHANNESBURG 0161, (B) DAR ES SALAAM 0347

1. AFTER SOME SELECTIVE COMPARING OF NOTES WITH BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER BROWN HERE, THE BEST EXPLANATION I CAN OFFER FOR INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN BRITISH VERSION OF NYERERE'S REACTION TO SMITH'S REJECTION OF RICHARD PROPOSALS (REF A) AND HIS PRESENTATION TO US (REF B) IS AS FOLLOWS.

2. BRITISH BELIEVE THAT NYERERE, ASIDE FROM SMITH HIMSELF, BEARS SINGLE GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY FOR FAILURE THEIR LONG AND PAINFUL EFFORT DEVELOP RHODESIAN SOLUTION. THEY FEEL IT IS NYERERE WHO HAS BEEN HARDEST LINER ON AFRICAN SIDE. IT WAS HE WHO DEMANDED AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER; HE WHO INSISTED ON COMPLETELY DOMINANT ROLE FOR PATRIOTIC FRONT; HE WHO EVADED HIS PROMISE TO GIVE PUBLIC UNEQUIVOCAL AFFIRMATION THAT BEGINNING OF TRANSITION GOVERNMENT WOULD SIGNAL END OF FIGHTING; ETC., ETC.

3. THEIR ANNOYANCE WITH HIM CLEARLY INCREASED WHEN, AFTER THEY FELT THAT THEY HAD MADE MAJOR CONCESSIONS TO HIM IN DEVELOPING THEIR FORMULA, HE TOLD BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER THAT HE WAS
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"VERY PLEASED" THAT SMITH HAD REJECTED THE FORMULA. THE FACT THAT HE WENT ON FROM THAT TO PRESS THEM TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED BY BRITISH TO BE OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE OR INDEED TO BE FURTHER PROOF OF HIS UNTRUST-WORTHINESS.

4. IT IS TRUE THAT IN HIS PRESENTATION TO US (REF B), NYERERE

DID SAY THAT HE WAS "NOT ALTOGETHER UNHAPPY" THAT SMITH HAD REJECTED PRESENT RICHARD FORMULA; "IT MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTABLE TO AFRICANS ANYWAY." BUT HE DID THIS IN SUCH A THROWAWAY MANNER AS INTRODUCTION TO HIS PITCH FOR CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS THAT I (PERHAPS MISTAKENLY) DID NOT EVEN REPORT IT. NEITHER TO ME NOR TO THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER DID HE GIVE AS A REASON THE NEED TO GET ON WITH THE WAR FOR COMPLETE LIBERATION. QUITE THE CONTRARY, HE STRESSED TO US BOTH THE NEED TO MOVE AHEAD ON THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT, ALTHOUGH IMPLICIT IN SOME OF HIS REMARKS TO ME WAS THE IDEA THAT THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS FOR WHICH HE WAS PRESSING COULD NOW BE LESS INHIBITED BY CONSTANT BRITISH CONCERN OVER WHAT MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO SMITH.

5. IT IS THIS LAST VIEW WHICH SEEMS TO ME TO BE THE CORE OF NYERERE'S HARD LINE APPROACH TO THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. HE WILL NOT TRUST SMITH. HE HAS NOT YET COMPLETELY GOTTEN OVER WHAT HE CONSIDERS A REVERSAL IN US-UK APPROACH WHICH HE SAW INITIALLY AS TALKING ABOUT A TRANSITION PROCESS IN WHICH SMITH HAD NO PLACE BUT WHICH LATER PUT GREAT EMPHASIS ON THE FACT OF SMITH'S POWER. HE STILL FEELS THAT IF THE US AND UK REALLY WANTED TO THEY COULD SOMEHOW OR OTHER MAKE SMITH STEP DOWN--AFTER WHICH NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE EASY. IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH US-UK ACTION, TO HIM THE ONLY REAL MEANS OF GETTING SMITH OUT IS THE GUERRILLAS. WHILE WE CERTAINLY HAVE NOT TOLD HIM THAT FIGHTING MUST STOP BEFORE A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION, HE IS STILL WORRIED ABOUT OUR DISTASTE FOR VIOLENCE AND KEEPS TRYING TO CONVINCE US OF ITS NECESSITY.

6. ANOTHER EXPLANATION FOR NYERERE'S APPARENT INCONSISTENCY IS
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OBVIOUS. ONE OF HIS GREAT TALENTS IS FOR PRESENTING HIS VIEW ON ANY SUBJECT IN THE WAY HE CALCULATES MOST LIKELY TO HAVE THE DESIRED EFFECT ON HIS LISTENER. HE VERY MUCH WANTS US TO STAY ACTIVELY INTERESTED IN RHODESIA. HE WANTS TO GOAD THE BRITISH INTO DOING WHAT HE THINKS THEY WOULD DO WITH RHODESIA IF THEY DID NOT HAVE TO TAKE SMITH INTO ACCOUNT.

7. IN ANY EVENT, INDICATIONS ARE THAT NYERERE CAN CONTINUE TO BE A CONSTRUCTIVE ELEMENT IN THE SEARCH FOR A RHODESIAN SOLUTION. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY VERY PLEASED WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER, AS HIS REPLY TO IT INDICATES. SECRETARY VANCE'S LETTER MAKING CLEAR OUR OPPOSITION TO SMITH'S COURSE HAS REASSURED HIM OF OUR INTENTIONS IN THAT DIRECTION. WE HAVE HIS REASSURANCE THAT HE REMAINS COMMITTED TO PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS, ALBEIT FOR THE MOMENT ONLY TO A SPECIFIC KIND. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER WE HAD CONSULTED WITH THE BRITISH AND OTHERS INVOLVED, WE SHOULD COME BACK TO HIM, EITHER SUPPORTING HIS PROPOSALS FOR CONTINUED BRITISH-NATIONALIST TALKS OR PROPOSING AN ALTERNATIVE AND GIVING THE FULLEST AND FRANKEST POSSIBLE

EXPLANATION OF OUR THINKING.

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